Billy Carlyle began her professional career in the early 1920s as a model and dramatic actress. After touring with D.B. O'Connor's company in 1924 she was cast in the film *The Adventures of Algy* (1925). Carlyle and the film's star Claude Dampier teamed up soon afterwards, securing work as a comedy sketch act with the Fullers. Carlyle also worked briefly with Brandon Cremer's Comedy Company. A move to England in 1927 saw the pair establish a popular comedy partnership on stage and in radio that lasted until Dampier's death in 1955. Carlyle appeared in at least five British films and two variety television series between 1930 and 1947.

► See also: Claude Dampier

- Dampier and Carlyle married in 1929.
- Carlyle self-published *Claude Dampier, Mrs Gibson and Me* in 1978 (Mrs Gibson being a fictional audience member popularized by Dampier).
- Although several film databases (including IMDb) indicate that Carlyle appeared in only six films, she has been linked to several more through various newspaper articles published in the 1930s. See below for further details.

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Dampier, Claude and Billie Carlyle
The Comedy duo of Claude Dampier and Billie Carlyle were active during the 1930s and 1940s, and worked across stage, cinema and radio. Carlyle played the glamorous straight woman to Dampier's "professional idiot." In 1929 they were married. The pair played in Music Halls, and became popular on radio broadcasts. Dampier's film work included roles in *Such is Life, Wanted!* (1937), *All In* (1936), *Mr Stringfellow Says No* (1934), *Boys Will Be Boys* (1935), *She Shall Have Music* (1935), *The White Lilac* (1935), and *King of the Castle* (1936) among many others.

**Collection Holdings**

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► Claude Dampier and Billie Carlyle on *Workers' Playtime* 16/02/1943. BBC Home Service. [Sighted 9/05/2018] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wmogM09H2mE
Billie Carlisle (1901–1991)

Actress

Billie Carlisle was born in 1901 in Adelaide, Australia. She was an actress, known for *The Adventures of Algry* (1925), *Sing as You Swing* (1937) and *Music and Millions* (1936). She died on July 23, 1991 in Staines, England. See full bio »

Born: 1901 in Adelaide, Australia
Died: July 23, 1991 (age 90) in Staines, England, UK

**Filmography**

Jump to: Actress | Self

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<th><strong>Actress</strong> (6 credits)</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>Wot! No Gangsters?</em> (Short)</td>
<td>1946</td>
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<td><em>Sing as You Swing</em></td>
<td>1937</td>
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<td><em>Music and Millions</em> Secretary</td>
<td>1936</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>She Shall Have Music</em> (uncredited)</td>
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<td><em>Claude Debutises</em> (Short) Singer</td>
<td>1930</td>
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<td><em>The Adventures of Algry</em> Mollie Moore</td>
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<th><strong>Self</strong> (2 credits)</th>
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<td><em>Variety</em> (TV Series) <em>Herself</em></td>
<td>1946</td>
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<td>- Episode dated 27 August 1946 (1946) ... Herself (as Billie Carlyle)</td>
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<td>- Episode dated 25 July 1946 (1946) ... Herself (as Billie Carlyle)</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Western Cabaret</em> (TV Series) <em>Herself</em></td>
<td>1939</td>
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<td>- Episode #1.3 (1939) ... Herself</td>
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http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0137597/

http://www.rarepostcard.com
O'BRIEN'S HALL, TUMUT, WEDNESDAY, 17TH DECEMBER.

D. B. O'CONNOR presents
"THE MERRY WIDOW"
"THE MERRY WIDOW"
"THE MERRY WIDOW"
"THE MERRY WIDOW"

By arrangement with J. C. Williamson, Ltd.

D. B. O'Connor in his original role of Prince Danilo; Marie Adair as Sonia; May Lewis, Billie Carlyle; May Sharpe, Theo Boase; Eric V. Conway, Harry Kitto.

Big Supporting Company.
Prices : 4/-, 3/- and 2/- (plus tax).
Box Plan at Potts' Emporium.
No extra for booking.

TUMBARUMBA.—Thursday, 18th.
E. V. CONWAY, Representative.
NEW FILMS

"THE ADVENTURES OF ALGY"

While the story of "The Adventures of Algy" is a little naive in places, at least it is strong enough to hold interest. It has been produced by Mr. Beaumont Smith, partly in Australia and partly in New Zealand. One can see Claude Dampier carrying on quaint antics in Martin-place, at Circular Quay, and on board the Sydney Ferry Company's steamer Kulu, in each case backed by a sprinkling of interested sightseers. He makes a genial figure of the dogn, but one cannot help feeling that his talents in the direction of broad farce have not found their proper scope.

As a whole the acting is on a much higher plane than that of the average Australian production. Bathie Stuart, for instance, makes quite a dramatic part of the little New Zealand girl who exploits the dances she has learnt from her Maori friends as leading lady in a Sydney revue. Mr. Beaumont Smith has selected the occasion to introduce elaborate ballet scenes, apparently on the stage of the Palace Theatre, and glimpses of dancing amid the actual carved busts of the Maori.

In addition to Wellington, of the hot springs near Rotorua, and of the New Zealand countryside in general. The main of the piece is played by Eric Harrison, with the usual amorous expressions. Billy Carlyle appears as the girl his part drives to pine nerve rackingly on the edge of the Gap at Watson's Bay. "The Adventures of Algy" was released by Australasian Films on Saturday at the Lyceum and Lyric Wintergarden theatres.

1925

SYDNEY MORNING HERALD 22 JUNE 1925, 7.

MIRROR (PERTH) 8 AUG. 1925, 7.
AMUSEMENTS

VICTORIA THEATRE

"Much Married," the second production at the Victoria Theatre by the Brandon Cremer Comedy Company, was endorsed by two big audiences at the initial performances on Saturday. It is a three-act comedy, abounding in funny situations, which work up to an exceedingly hilarious climax. The central figure is Arthur Hummingtop, who, in the absence of his wife, meets and renders a service to an enterprising music-hall girl. She learns of his identity and arrives at his home at a time when he is expecting his niece, Dancy Maitland, from America. To allay the suspicions of his ever-watchful and nagging mother-in-law, Hummingtop introduces the actress, who comes unnoticed to the home, as his niece, and in spite of her attractions the girl is accepted by the mother-in-law, who hopes to marry the girl to her son. The arrival of the American niece and the wife create more complications, which are again added to by the unexpected conduct of Ralph Hamblen, a friend of Hummingtop, and who had previously met and fallen in love with the niece. Hummingtop makes many attempts to find a solution of the difficulty, but each explanation only makes his position worse. Practically everyone in the household is cast under a cloud as a result of his compulsory lying, but eventually the tangled threads unravel themselves, and the story is brought to a happy and logical conclusion. Mr. A. Brandon Cremer was the centre of all the fun as Arthur Hummingtop, the much married man, whose disinclination and intriguing were unbeknown to the audience, and an obvious appreciation of the part. He was particularly funny in showing the hen-pecked individual’s change of front from bravado to ignominious submission on the occasion of every battle with the mother-in-law. The last-mentioned character was ably presented by Miss May Granville, and was one of the finest character drawing of the performances. Miss Gertie Cremer was a charming Dancy Maitland, who marries Ralph Hamblen, the part attractively played by Mr. Leslie A. Jones. Miss Billee Carlyle and Mr. Bert Frawley as Barbara, the housemaid, and Dobson, the butler, respectively, whose love-making was also affected by the scheme of Hummingtop, were very well placed. Miss Theresa Desmond was convincing in the part of Mrs. Hummingtop, while the music-hall girl was ably characterised by Miss Kathleen Arnold. Mr. Bertie Wright did good work in presenting the laughable character of Joshua Gilbrad, mother’s boy and man-about-town. Added enjoyment was given the performances by the music of a full orchestra.

On Monday, June 28, “Hullo Marmaduke,” an Australian-made comedy, will be presented at Gundagidee Theatre. Claude Dampier will appear on the stage with his partner Billy Carlyle, in comedy songs and sketches. He is known as the Silly Ass Comedian.

Queanbeyan Age and Queanbeyan Observer (NSW) 18 June 1926, 2.
Vaudeville first half during George Wallace Revue Co season.

Register (Adelaide) 15 Nov. 1926, 13.

"On the Stage: Mirth at Majestic - Revue and Vaudeville."
MISS BILLIE CARLYLE
Says for Fair Hair Stailax Shampoo is the best obtainable.
GEORGE ROBEY IN FILM

The Gainsborough Company has engaged for “Marry Me,” a talking film to be made at Islington studios, Harry Green, the famous Hebrew comedian, George Robey, Billy Carlyll and Miss Renate Muller.

With Miss Muller and this notable trio of comedians will appear Athole Stewart, Ian Hunter, Maurice Evans, and Charles Hawthrey, junr.

GAUMONT BRITISH NEWS

“JACK’S THE BOY”

The present and impending output of British films being made under Gaumont British Picture Corporation’s big production scheme has rapidly assumed an importance in home and foreign picture markets.

This month will in many ways, be an important Gaumont British month marked by trade shows of the Gainsborough-British Lion picture “There Goes the Bride” directed by Albert de Courville; with Jessie Matthews, Owen Nares, Jerry Verno and Carol Goodner as stars. “Marry Me” directed by Wm. Thiele at Islington, and presenting Renate Muller (“Sunshine Susie”) in her second British picture with Ian Hunter, George Robey, Harry Green and Billy Carlyll; and “Rome Express” the first Gaumont British pictures to be produced at the new Shepherds Bush studios.
Empire Theatre.

"Ghost Towns" of the early California gold days, slumbering many years in forgotten loneliness, had a brief period of new glory during the filming of "Robin Hood of El Dorado," the spectacular feature starring Warner Baxter, to be screened at the Empire Theatre on Saturday and Monday next.

A small army of workmen from the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios was recruited to rebuild a half dozen of the ancient mining camps in the heart of the gold region of '49, as backgrounds for the romantic story of Joaquin Murrieta, the West's glamorous early-day bandit. Among the towns reconstructed were Sawmill Flat, Sutter's Fort, and the old mill site on the Sutter property, where gold was first discovered in California. Such notorious saloons as Angel's Rest and the Last Chance, which figured in the history of the state, were rebuilt from old sketches and descriptions.

Many popular stage, variety and radio artists appear in the supporting picture, "She Shall Have Music," a British musical, which stars Jack Hylton and his Band. One of the most interesting is Magda Neeld, who sings in the Venetian scene in the film. This young Australian has only been in England a short time but has already become popular on the radio. Her beautiful singing in "She Shall Have Music" has excited considerable comment and there is no doubt whatsoever as to the future of this young artiste.

Other brilliant stars in the film are Matha Merryfield, an American fan dancer who recently had a successful English debut at the Palladium Theatre; Carmen, a charming Spanish dancer; the two Mackeys, colored step dancers; Billy Carlyle; the Dalmora Can-Can Dancers; the Wozikowsky Ballet and the Terry Juvenile.

At the matinee on Saturday "Robin Hood of El Dorado," the 11th episode of the serial "The Red Rider," and a selected program of shorts will be screened.
English Races Described From Daventry

SPORTING commentaries on cricket and racing are in this week’s programmes from the Empire station at Daventry. Howard Marshall, English broadcast commentator and cricket journalist, will give commentaries on the match between the Australians and Middlesex at Lord’s at 9.45 p.m. on Monday, and at 9.30 p.m. on Tuesday.

At 4 o’clock on Thursday afternoon, listeners will hear a description of the English Derby from Epsom and at 3 o’clock on Saturday afternoon a commentary on the running of the Oaks will be given.

Harold Williams, the Australian baritone, and a frequent artist in the B.B.C. programmes, will be heard twice in the week’s programmes—on Monday at 3.35 p.m. and on Sunday, June 5, at 8.30 p.m.

Glittering days of a variety star

Archivists must love the likes of Billie Carlyle. One half of a famous comedy act of the ‘30s and ‘40s, Billie has kept letters, programmes, photographs and Press cuttings since she first started in showbiz almost 60 years ago.

Now, at 78, she is sending a prized selection from her memorabilia to Melbourne’s Performing Arts Museum, expected to open next year.

Billie’s career — as glamorous straight woman to British comedian Claude Dampier’s “professional idiot” — took her from Sydney where they first teamed up, to London’s West End. Claude made his fortune by horsing around. He was the clumsy pianist or the simple-minded servant who got everything wrong. He also invented a

Mrs Gibson, who was all that was silly. She became Billie and Claude’s trademark.

Billie has published a book about her experiences, titled “Claude Dampier, Mrs Gibson And Me.” It’s all breezy determination, lucky breaks and making it to the big time.

Life was simpler then. In 1925 in Sydney, when Billie decided to go from model to movie actress, she merely hopped into a taxi, found the nearest studio making a film, auditioned and got the part.

That’s how she met Claude. He was playing the lead role while visiting Australia. The film, “The Adventures of Alg,” is now regarded as one of the best comedies of its time.

Two years later he took her back to London where they married, and soon became favourites in entertainment.

Claude died in 1955 but Billie still lives in their Thames-side bungalow home, with her scrapbooks and tapes. — SHELLEY GARE


Australian Variety Theatre Archive: Research Notes

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